

AD-A267 765



Reprinted from JOURNAL OF PHYSICAL OCEANOGRAPHY, Vol. 23, No. 5, May 1993
American Meteorological Society

DTIC
ELECTE
AUG 9 1993
S C L

On the Effects of Horizontal Resolution in a Limited-Area Model of the Gulf Stream System

WILLIAM J. SCHMITZ, JR.

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Woods Hole, Massachusetts

J. DANA THOMPSON†

Ocean Sensing and Prediction Division, Naval Research Laboratory, Stennis Space Center, Mississippi

20 February 1992 and 2 June 1992

ABSTRACT

An adiabatic, primitive equation, eddy-resolving circulation model has been applied to the Gulf Stream System from Cape Hatteras to east of the Grand Banks (30° – 48° N, 78° – 45° W). A two-layer version of the model was driven both by direct wind forcing and by transport prescribed at inflow ports south of Cape Hatteras for the Gulf Stream and near the Grand Banks of Newfoundland for the deep western boundary current. The mean upper-layer thickness was sufficiently large for interface outcropping not to occur. Numerical experiments previously run at 0.2° horizontal resolution (~ 20 km) had some realistic features, but a key unresolved deficiency was that the highest eddy kinetic energies obtained near the Gulf Stream were too low relative to data by a factor of about 2, with inadequate eastward penetration.

A unique set of new numerical experiments has extended previous results to higher horizontal resolution, all other conditions being held fixed. At 0.1° horizontal resolution, eddy kinetic energies in the vicinity of the Gulf Stream realistically increase by a factor of roughly 2 relative to 0.2° . The increase in eddy activity is a result of enhanced energy conversion from mean flow to fluctuations due to barotropic and baroclinic instabilities, with the nature of the instability mixture as well as eddy energy changing with increased resolution. One experiment at 0.05° horizontal resolution (~ 5 km) yielded kinetic energies and key energy transfer terms that are within 10% of the equivalent 0.1° case, suggesting that convergence of the numerical solutions has nearly been reached.

1. Introduction

Detailed comparisons between ocean model results and observations have increased dramatically in the past decade. This is due in part to the availability of new datasets and more realistic ocean models (Schmitz et al. 1983; Treguier 1992). For the North Atlantic and North Pacific, results from idealized domain, quasigeostrophic models have been compared with observations in a series of studies (e.g., Schmitz and Holland 1982; Holland and Schmitz 1985; Schmitz and Holland 1986). Such investigations were extended to more realistic geometry by Thompson and Schmitz (1989, hereafter TS89) for a limited-area, two-layer, primitive equation model of the Gulf Stream System (see also Hallock et al. 1989).

Here, we extend TS89 to include a new sequence of numerical experiments, with emphasis on the effect of horizontal resolution while leaving *all* other model properties unchanged. To resolve better the Gulf Stream, which has a width scale of 100 km and a first baroclinic radius of deformation of 35 km, we decided to examine numerical experiments at a resolution of 10 and 5 km to compare with previous numerical experiments (TS89) at 20 km. We begin in the next section by describing the basic numerical experiments, followed by a section on special runs and a section on energetics. Then we summarize the new results and outline conclusions. As noted by TS89, our Gulf Stream model was adapted from an earlier formulation by Hurlburt and Thompson (1980).

2. The basic numerical experiments

The most realistic numerical experiment completed by TS89, at 0.2° horizontal resolution, was called 5.5 (parameters are listed in Table 1). Two versions of this model configuration were discussed [here labeled 8.8

† Dana Thompson passed away 6 October 1992.

Corresponding author address: William J. Schmitz, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Woods Hole, MA 02543.

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A
 Approved for public release
 Distribution Unlimited

93-18277

9 3 5

TABLE 1. Model 5.5 (0.2° horizontal resolution) parameters.

A	$10^6 \text{ cm}^2 \text{ s}^{-1}$
g	980 cm s^{-2}
g'	2 cm s^{-2}
H_1	1000 m
H_2	4000 m
$\Delta x, \Delta y$	0.2°
Δt	20–80 min
C_b	0 and 2×10^{-3}
DWBC	20 Sv

(5.5a) with no bottom friction and 9.3 (5.5b) with quadratic bottom friction coefficient $C_b = 2.0 \times 10^{-3}$ (see TS89)]. For the sake of brevity and clarity, we will focus the discussion on the case with nonzero, but small ($C_b = 2 \times 10^{-3}$) bottom friction.

Upper- and lower-layer eddy kinetic energies (hereafter EKE1 and EKE2, respectively; always per unit mass in units: $\text{cm}^2 \text{ s}^{-2}$) for numerical experiment 9.3 (Table 1) are contained in Fig. 1. These time averages are typically calculated over a 3-year period after the model run is spun up to statistical equilibrium, the latter normally taking 10–15 years. EKE1 patterns are

too weak west of the New England Seamounts. EKE2 values (Fig. 1b) are weaker than observed at 55°W by a factor of about 2 (see also TS89).

The paths of the Gulf Stream (defined as in TS89) for 8.8 and 9.3 are variably displaced latitudinally relative to observation, to the north more often than south. There is “overshoot” of the model axis just to the east of Cape Hatteras, and the model 9.3 Gulf Stream rides somewhat north over the abyssal plain east of the New England Seamounts, with corresponding errors in EKE (and other) fields. That is, specification of a deep western boundary current (DWBC) of 20 Sv ($\text{Sv} \equiv 10^6 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$) helped but did not “solve” the axis location problem in the experiments considered by TS89. Similar path discrepancies (W. R. Holland, personal communication) have also been experienced with another model (Bryan and Holland 1989); the separation problem has recently been discussed in detail by Cessi (1990), Cessi et al. (1990), and Chassignet and Gent (1991) (see also Ezer and Mellor 1992; Pickart and Watts 1990; Watts 1991).

We decided to examine the effect of horizontal grid spacing on these discrepancies by exactly doubling the resolution for 9.3 to 0.1°, all other parameters held

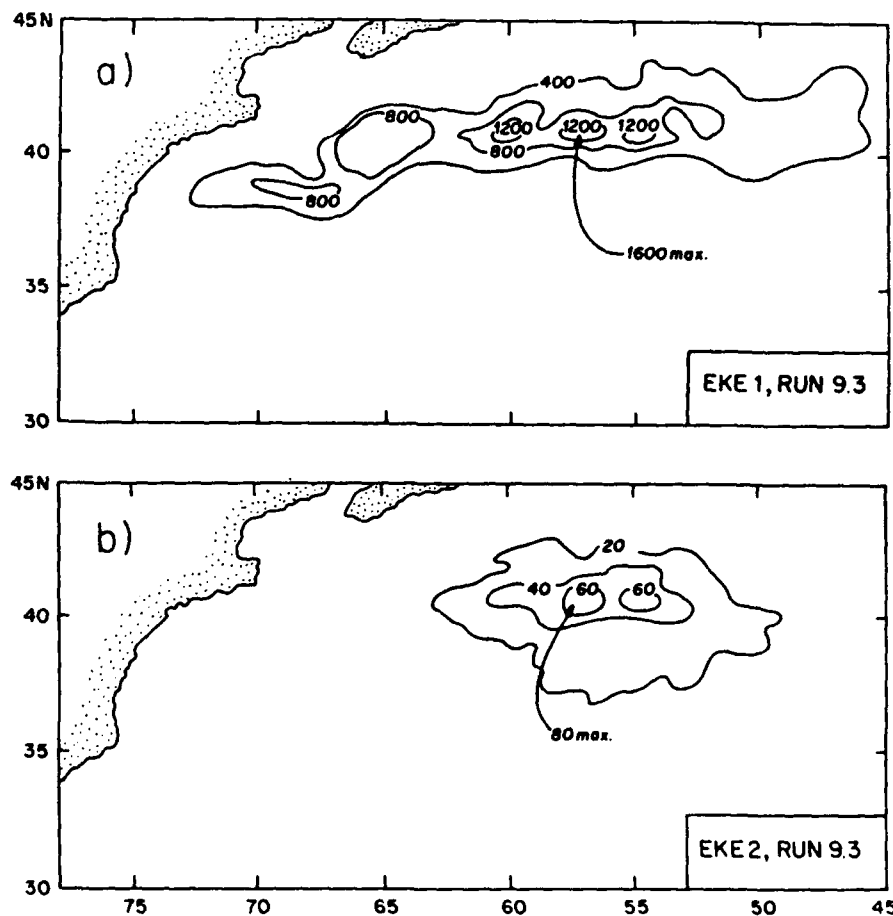


FIG. 1. Eddy kinetic energy per unit mass (EKE) maps for model run 9.3 (0.2° horizontal resolution): (a) upper layer, (b) lower layer. Units: $\text{cm}^2 \text{ s}^{-2}$.

constant. In so doing, forcing functions, topography, and coastlines previously digitized on a 0.2° grid were linearly interpolated to a 0.1° (double-resolution) grid. With these choices, we isolate the effect of horizontal resolution on the solutions. The new experiment, labeled 9.4, is identical in parameters to Table 1 except that shorter integration time steps were needed for 0.1° resolution to satisfy numerical stability requirements.

The EKE1 values in Fig. 2a for 0.1° horizontal resolution (numerical experiment 9.4) are more energetic than the equivalent cases at 0.2° resolution (numerical experiment 9.3) in Fig. 1a by about a factor of 2. The EKE2 values in Fig. 2b are also more energetic than those in Fig. 1b by a factor of roughly 2. Generally speaking, all EKE fields, especially for the lower layer, show increased (too much perhaps) eastward penetration or displacement for 0.1° relative to 0.2° horizontal resolution. The divergences of the model axes from the observed Gulf Stream axis are still present, somewhat more so than was the case for 0.2° resolution.

3. Special numerical experiments

To find out if convergence of these solutions was at hand, we also carried out a numerical experiment at

0.05° resolution. We were limited to one computer run by the amount of machine time involved, and by sensitivity at this resolution to the outflow boundary condition during extreme eastward penetration of the jet. All input fields were linearly interpolated from the equivalent 0.1° case. EKE1 results for 0.05° resolution in Fig. 3a are within about 10% of the equivalent fields in Fig. 2a, the analogous 0.1° case, and with a continued tendency toward increased eastward penetration of the EKE1 field. A similar summary statement applies to EKE2 (Fig. 3b vs Fig. 2b). The small-scale maximum in abyssal K_E between 65° and 70° W in Fig. 2b is absent at 0.05° (Fig. 3b). This feature has observational support (Luyten 1977; Bane et al. 1990; Shay and Bane 1990). Path problems were not ameliorated in moving from 0.1° to 0.05° resolution.

We also reran a case at 0.1° resolution and $C_b = 2 \times 10^{-3}$ with the transport of the DWBC = 0 instead of DWBC = 20 Sv. The results were similar to those described by TS89 in that a DWBC shifted the Gulf Stream separation latitude southward, as cyclonic potential vorticity was advected southward; however, the effect was not as strong as in the 0.2° experiments. We have not experimented with moving the DWBC core up and down the slope to test separation sensitivity to

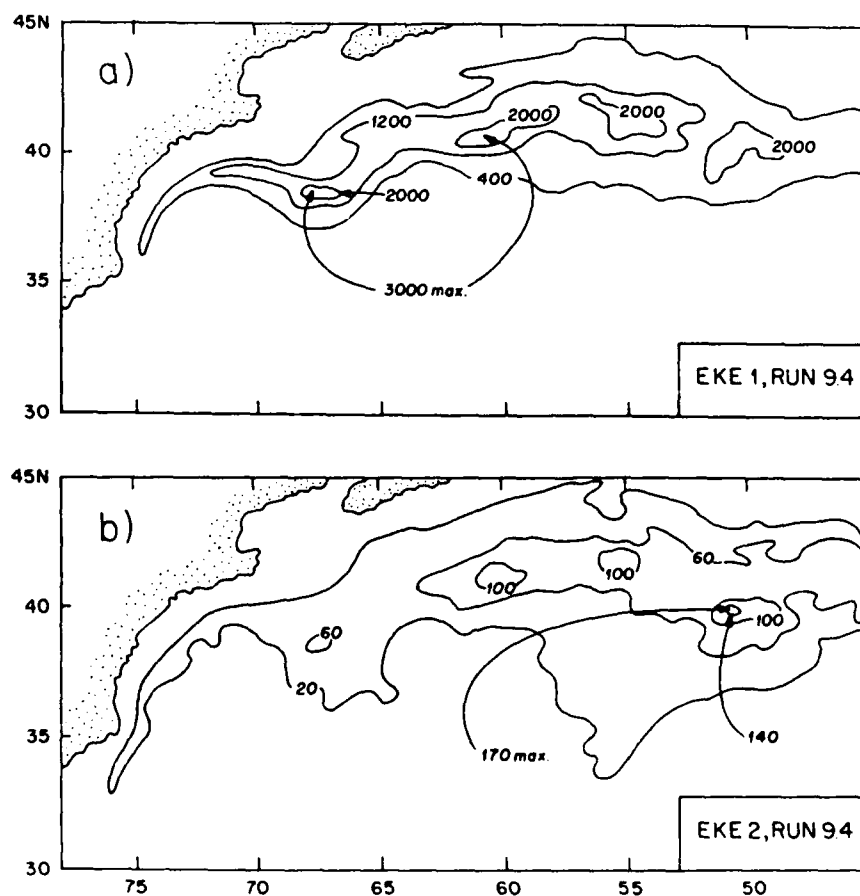


FIG. 2. As in Fig. 1 but for model run 9.4 (0.1° horizontal resolution).

Accession For	
NTIS	RA&I
DTIC	TAB
Unannounced	
Justification	
By	
Distribution /	
Availability Code	
Dist	Avail and/or Special
A-1	20

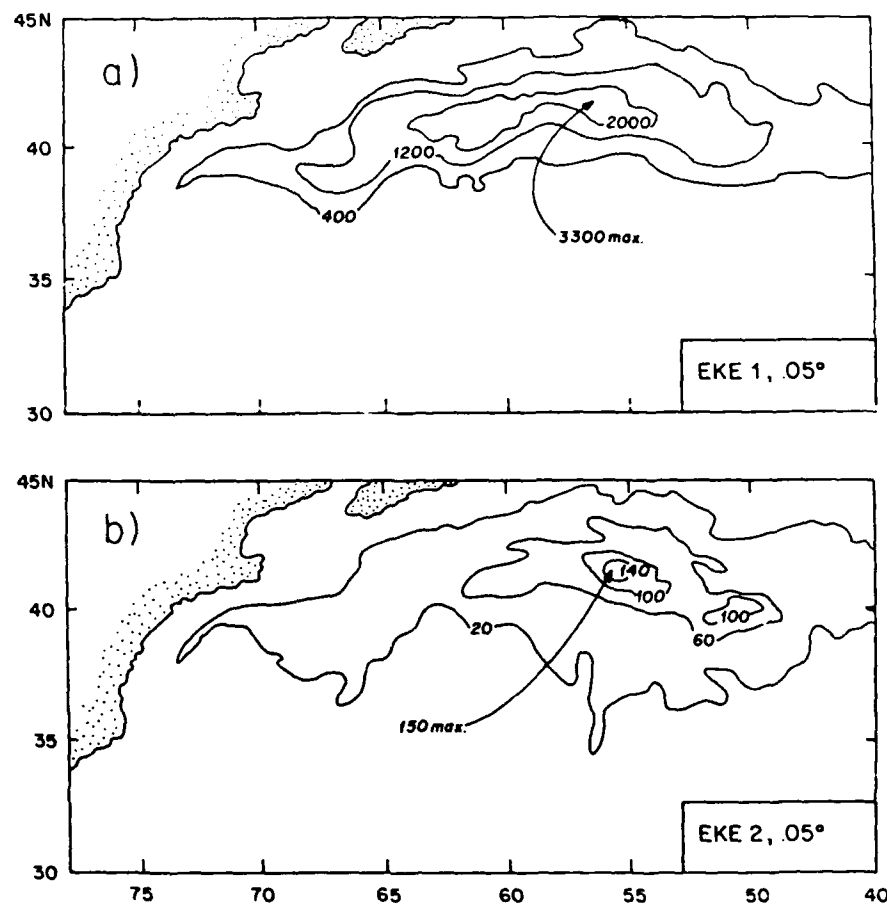


FIG. 3. As in Fig. 1 but for model run 2.0 (0.05° horizontal resolution).

DWBC location. We conclude that increased horizontal resolution only does not significantly alter path overshoot.

4. Energetics analysis

The model Gulf Stream energy levels in Figs. 1–3 change significantly from the 0.2°- to 0.1°-resolution experiments, and not much in moving from 0.1° to 0.05° horizontal resolution. To examine these changes further, we have constructed an energy budget reservoir and flow diagram (Fig. 4) for experiments 9.3 (0.2°), 9.4 (0.1°), and for the 0.05° experiment (2.0). Energy reservoirs are shown in the boxes on Fig. 4 and energy transfer rates are shown with the arrows connecting the boxes. In each experiment the model data is sampled every four days for four years after reaching approximate statistical equilibrium. The domain used in calculating the energetics extended from 33° to 45°N and 76° to 50°W. Terms and notation are standard (Hurlburt and Thompson 1982) with one exception. In formulating the model in terms of transport, the Laplacian of transport was used to parameterize diffusion. For small variations in layer thickness this is

equivalent to using the Laplacian of velocity in the momentum equations. Because the eddy-mean energetics equations are formulated in velocity rather than transport form, there is a slight inconsistency between model output data and energetics calculations [see Hurlburt and Thompson (1982) for details]. We have verified that this difference in the magnitude of the diffusion is always less than 10% of the absolute magnitude of the sum of all the transfer terms in or out of a given box. We have therefore calculated the diffusion term in each KE box as a residual to insure balance. Our conclusions do not depend on the small difference this procedure makes in the energy transfer magnitudes.

Energy budget results are summarized in Table 2. Note that the transfer rate from mean to eddy kinetic energy in the upper layer increases by a factor of 2 from 9.3 (0.2° horizontal resolution) to 9.4 (0.1° horizontal resolution), as does the energy level itself (Fig. 4; Table 2). The mixture of barotropic and baroclinic instability influences, as measured by $\text{MKE1} \rightarrow \text{EKE1}$ and $\text{MPE} \rightarrow \text{EPE} \rightarrow \text{EKE1}$, respectively, becomes more barotropic for the upper layer with increasing horizontal resolution. That is, $\text{MKE1} \rightarrow \text{EKE1}$ increases by a factor of 2. The dominant process for the

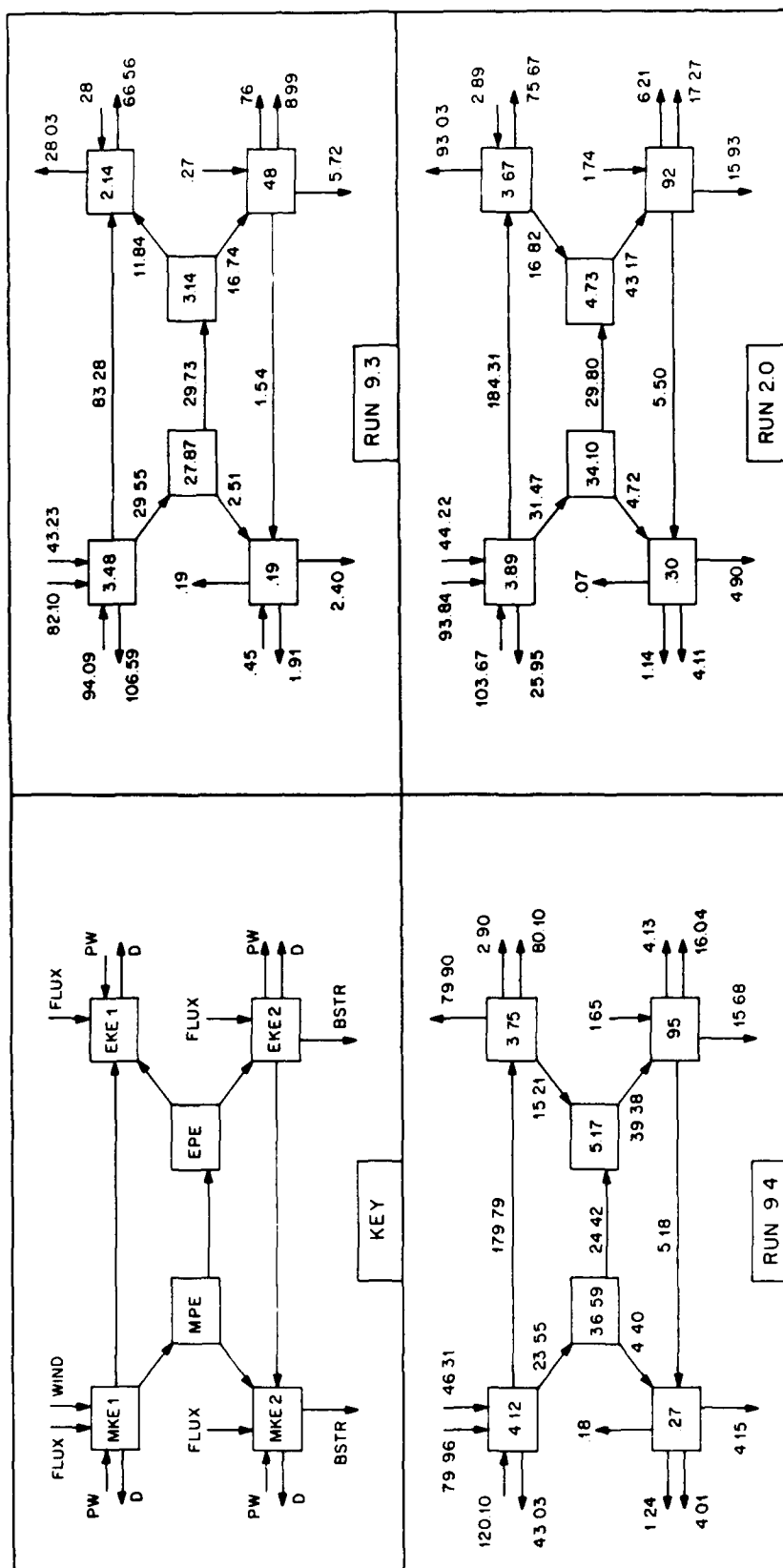


FIG. 4. Energetics box diagrams. The key for the transfer and reservoir terms is contained in the upper left-hand box. See Hurlburt and Thompson (1982) for a detailed formulation. PW refers to pressure-work, D is dissipation via Laplacian friction, and BSTR is bottom stress (quadratic). Reservoir units: $10^4 \text{ J m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$.

TABLE 2. Selected energetics results.

Run (horizontal resolution)	Total K_e		MKE1 \rightarrow EKE1	MPE \rightarrow EPE	EPE \rightarrow EKE2
	Upper layer	Lower layer			
9.3 (0.2°)	2.14	0.48	83.3	16.7	16.7
9.4 (0.1°)	3.75	0.95	179.8	39.9	39.4
2.0 (0.05°)	3.67	0.92	184.3	43.2	43.2

lower layer is still MPE \rightarrow EPE \rightarrow EKE2, which also doubles approximately in moving from 0.2° to 0.1° horizontal resolution (Fig. 4; Table 2). These diagrams also demonstrate that the model solutions have nearly converged at 0.05° resolution, with both reservoir and transfer terms changing from 9.4 to 2.0 by 10% or less. As resolution increases, total potential energy and kinetic energy levels also increase, but their ratio (roughly 5.5) changes little from experiment to experiment. Pressure work terms are relatively more important compared to dissipation in the higher-resolution experiments.

As noted by a reviewer, parameter choice, layer depths, and model type can have tremendous influences on the nature of the instability. In the context of this investigation, however, we have shown that if we change only model resolution from the TS89 experiments (which we compared extensively with observations), the barotropic instability increases in relative importance to baroclinic instability and the deep EKE is more realistic at 55°W. There is currently no convincing observational evidence supporting the dominance of baroclinic or barotropic instability in the Gulf Stream System from Cape Hatteras to the Grand Banks. We do see that the velocity structure downstream of the New England Seamount Chain has a larger barotropic component than is the case upstream (Hogg 1992). Our view is that we are dealing with a mixed instability with baroclinic dominating in the formation region of the Gulf Stream and barotropic dominating in the decay region, along with relatively different influences on upper- and lower-layer fields. Holland and Schmitz (1985) examined midlatitude jet penetration in quasigeostrophic models of the Gulf Stream having up to eight layers. Barotropic instability dominated baroclinic instability in all experiments by factors of 2 to 100. Thinner layers increased the relative importance of barotropic instability as did larger lateral friction. Finally, unlike the jet stream in the troposphere, where baroclinic instability dominates the energy transfers, the Gulf Stream from Cape Hatteras to the Grand Banks is not a free zonal jet. It is distinctly nonzonal, influenced greatly by lateral boundaries and topography, and has a very different vertical distribution of velocity.

Barnier et al. (1991) and Böning and Budich (1992) found that increased resolution tends to increase baroclinic instability relative to barotropic instability. We find that as the solutions converge in our experiments,

the increasingly dominant process is barotropic instability. This may be a result of our two-layer system or differences in the friction parameters chosen. While our results are limited, they do suggest that conclusions about relative roles of baroclinic and barotropic instability may change as solutions converge.

5. Summary and conclusions

We have applied a primitive equation numerical model as a two-layer analogue of the Gulf Stream System to a limited area from Cape Hatteras to east of the Grand Banks (30°–48°N, 78°–45°W). The new results reported here are associated with calculations made at 0.1° and 0.05° horizontal resolution, as compared to previous studies at 0.2° (TS89). At 0.2° resolution the model had eddy kinetic energies that were too low relative to observation by a factor of about 2. Also, the EKE patterns in both layers at 0.2° resolution had a distribution that was too westward intensified. At 0.1° horizontal grid spacing, eddy kinetic energies are of notably higher amplitude than at 0.2°, roughly double, and definitely a realistic tendency. These results are due to stronger instabilities whose relative importance changes with resolution. There is also much more eastward penetration at 0.1° resolution, perhaps too much. This result is consistent with investigations using other models (Barnier et al. 1991; Böning and Budich 1992). The one run at 0.05° resolution suggests that convergence of the numerical solutions has been achieved to within roughly 10%. We believe that this explicit demonstration of numerical convergence is unique.

Acknowledgments. This investigation was sponsored by the Office of Naval Research (WJS) under Grant N00014-89-J-1039 and at the Naval Research Laboratory (JDT) through the Naval Ocean Modeling Program (NOMP; Program Element Manager, Robert Peloquin) and the "Ocean Dynamics from Altimetry" Accelerated Research Initiative (Program Element Manager, William Moseley). Calculations were performed in collaboration with Professor John Bane on the Cray YMP at the University of North Carolina and on the Cray YMP at the Naval Oceanographic Office. Special thanks to Ms. Tamara Townsend of NRL for technical assistance and to Dr. Alan Wallcraft of Planning Systems, Inc. for computer expertise. Reviewers provided helpful and constructive comments.

REFERENCES

- Bane, J., T. Shay, and S. Haines, 1990: Year 2 in the SYNOP Inlet and Central Arrays. *SYNOPtician*, 1(6), 1-2. [Newsletter published by the Graduate School of Oceanography, University of Rhode Island.]
- Barnier, B., B. L. Hua, and C. Le Provost, 1991: On the catalytic role of high baroclinic modes in eddy-driven large-scale circulations. *J. Phys. Oceanogr.*, 21, 976-997.
- Böning, C. W., and R. G. Budich, 1992: Eddy dynamics in a primitive equation model: Sensitivity to horizontal resolution and friction. *J. Phys. Oceanogr.*, 22, 361-381.
- Bryan, F. O., and W. R. Holland, 1989: A high resolution simulation of the wind- and thermohaline-driven circulation of the North Atlantic Ocean. *Parameterization of Small-Scale Processes, Proc., 'Aha Huliko'a, Hawaiian Winter Workshop*, University of Hawaii at Manoa, P. Müller and D. Henderson, Eds., Hawaiian Inst. Geophys. Spec. Publ., University of Hawaii, 99-115.
- Cessi, P., 1990: Recirculation and separation of boundary currents. *J. Mar. Res.*, 48, 1-35.
- , R. V. Condie, and W. R. Young, 1990: Dissipative dynamics of western boundary currents. *J. Mar. Res.*, 48, 677-700.
- Chassignet, E. P., and P. R. Gent, 1991: The influence of boundary conditions on midlatitude jet separation in ocean numerical models. *J. Phys. Oceanogr.*, 21, 1290-1299.
- Ezer, T., and G. L. Mellor, 1992: A numerical study of the variability and the separation of the Gulf Stream induced by surface atmospheric forcing and lateral boundary flows. *J. Phys. Oceanogr.*, 22, 660-682.
- Hallock, Z. R., J. L. Mitchell, and J. D. Thompson, 1989: Sea surface topographic variability near the New England Seamounts: an intercomparison among in situ observations, numerical simulations, and GEOSAT altimetry from the Regional Energetics Experiment. *J. Geophys. Res.*, 94, 8021-8028.
- Hogg, N. G., 1992: On the transport of the Gulf Stream between Cape Hatteras and the Grand Banks. *Deep-Sea Res.*, 39, 1231-1246.
- Holland, W. R., and W. J. Schmitz, 1985: Zonal penetration scale of midlatitude jets. *J. Phys. Oceanogr.*, 15, 1859-1875.
- Hurlburt, H. E., and J. D. Thompson, 1980: A numerical study of loop current intrusions and eddy shedding. *J. Phys. Oceanogr.*, 10, 1611-1651.
- , and —, 1982: The dynamics of the loop current and shed eddies in a numerical model of the Gulf of Mexico. *Hydrodynamics of Semi-Enclosed Seas*, J. C. J. Nihoul, Ed., Elsevier Scientific, 243-298.
- Luyten, J., 1977: Scales of motion in the deep Gulf Stream and across the continental rise. *J. Mar. Res.*, 35, 49-74.
- Pickart, R. S., and D. R. Watts, 1990: Deep western boundary current variability at Cape Hatteras. *J. Mar. Res.*, 48, 765-791.
- Schmitz, W. J., Jr., and W. R. Holland, 1982: A preliminary comparison of selected numerical eddy-resolving general circulation experiments with observations. *J. Mar. Res.*, 40, 75-117.
- , and —, 1986: Observed and modeled mesoscale variability near the Gulf Stream and Kuroshio Extension. *J. Geophys. Res.*, 91, 9624-9638.
- , —, and J. F. Price, 1983: Mid-latitude mesoscale variability. *Rev. Geophys. Space Phys.*, 21, 1109-1119.
- Shay, T., and J. Bane, 1990: Preliminary results from year 1 of the SYNOP central array current meter moorings. *SYNOPtician*, 1, 1-3. [Newsletter published by the Graduate School of Oceanography, University of Rhode Island.]
- Thompson, J. D., and W. J. Schmitz, Jr., 1989: A limited-area model of the Gulf Stream: Design, initial experiments, and model-data intercomparison. *J. Phys. Oceanogr.*, 19, 791-814.
- Treguier, A. M., 1992: Kinetic energy analysis of an eddy resolving, primitive equation model of the North Atlantic. *J. Geophys. Res.*, 97, 687-701.
- Watts, D. R., 1991: Equatorward currents in temperatures 1.8-6.0°C on the continental slope in the Mid-Atlantic Bight. *Deep Convection and Deep Water Formation in the Oceans*, J.-C. Gascard and P. C. Chu, Eds. Elsevier Oceanogr. Ser., Vol. 51, 183-196.

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE 7/93	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED TECHNICAL	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE ON THE EFFECTS OF HORIZONTAL RESOLUTION IN A LIMITED-AREA MODEL OF THE GULF STREAM SYSTEM			5. FUNDING NUMBERS ONR N00014-89-J-1039	
6. AUTHOR(S) WILLIAM J. SCHMITZ, JR. AND J. DANA THOMPSON				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) WOODS HOLE OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTION WOODS HOLE, MA 02543			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER WHOI CONTR. 7730	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) OFFICE OF NAVAL RESEARCH ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES DIRECTORATE ARLINGTON, VA 22217-5660			10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES In citing this report in a bibliography, the reference given should be: JOURNAL OF PHYSICAL OCEANOGRAPHY 23(5):1001-1007, 1993				
12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE: DISTRIBUTION UNLIMITED			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words) An adiabatic, primitive equation, eddy-resolving circulation model has been applied to the Gulf Stream System from Cape Hatteras to east of the Grand Banks (30°-48°N, 78°-45°W). A two-layer version of the model was driven both by direct wind forcing and by transport prescribed at inflow ports south of Cape Hatteras for the Gulf Stream and near the Grand Banks of Newfoundland for the deep western boundary current. The mean upper-layer thickness was sufficiently large for interface outcropping not to occur. Numerical experiments previously run at 0.2° horizontal resolution (~20 km) had some realistic features, but a key unresolved deficiency was that the highest eddy kinetic energies obtained near the Gulf Stream were too low relative to data by a factor of about 2, with inadequate eastward penetration. A unique set of new numerical experiments has extended previous results to higher horizontal resolution, all other conditions being held fixed. At 0.1° horizontal resolution, eddy kinetic energies in the vicinity of the Gulf Stream realistically increase by a factor of roughly 2 relative to 0.2°. The increase in eddy activity is a result of enhanced energy conversion from mean flow to fluctuations due to barotropic and baroclinic instabilities, with the nature of the instability mixture as well as eddy energy changing with increased resolution. One experiment at 0.05° horizontal resolution (~5 km) yielded kinetic energies and key energy transfer terms that are within 10% of the equivalent 0.1° case, suggesting that convergence of the numerical solutions has nearly been reached.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS 1) HORIZONTAL RESOLUTION 2) MODEL 3) GULF STREAM			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 7	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	